

 COMPLIMENTS OF THE AUTHOR

PLACES RENDERED FAMOUS BY

DR. J. MARION SIMS,

IN MONTGOMERY, ALA.

NOTES ON A TRIP TO THE MEETING OF THE AMERICAN
SURGICAL ASSOCIATION IN NEW YORK, MAY, 1895.

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On my way to the meeting of the American Surgical Association last May, I stopped in Montgomery, Ala., where, through the courtesy and kindness of several of the local physicians, but especially of Dr. F. M. Thigpen and Dr. Waller, I was enabled to accomplish a pilgrimage, for many years close to my heart, to the places rendered famous by their connection with Dr. J. Marion Sims. Dr. Thigpen was so generous as to have the photographs of these places taken, and to him we owe the happiness of contemplating the humble places from which the eagle sprang to take its flight and carry higher and farther than any the genius of American surgery. These places are: the dilapidated house of the first patients, free negroes who sent for him when he first came to Montgomery; the modest office which he occupied, and in the rear yard of which was erected the forever famous little hospital in which he experimented upon Lucy, Betsey, Anarcha, and finally cured them; the hardware store where he bought the legendary pewter spoon from which developed the great and celebrated duck-bill speculum; the jeweler's store where the memorable first silver wire for sutures was drawn; the second house in which he lived, and in which he was living when he determined to leave Montgomery to go to New York.

* Read at the meeting of the Orleans Parish Medical Society, June, 1895.



No. 1.

House in which lived the "free niggers" who were the first patients of Dr. Sims when he moved to Montgomery, Ala., in December, 1840. (Story of My Life, p. 207.) The place is situated on Hanrich street, between Whitron and Heron. It was identified by Mrs. Dr. Rush Jones, the sister-in-law of Dr. Sims, who was in Montgomery at the time that Dr. Souchon was there, in May, 1895.



No. 2.

Office of Dr. Marion Sims, in Montgomery, Ala., in 1840-1853.
No. 19 Perry street, between Walnut and Court—now occupied by a plumber. It was identified by Dr. Henry, still living in that city, and the last surviving student of Dr. Sims in that very office.

"I had a little hospital of eight beds, built in the corner of the yard, for taking care of my negro patients and for negro surgical cases; and so when Lucy came I gave her a bed." (Story of My Life, p. 230). Here Luey, Betsey and Anareha were the first patients experimented upon and cured.



No. 3.

Building which was occupied by the Hardware Store of Hall, Mores and Roberts, where was bought the pewter spoon, 1845, which developed into the duck-bill speculum. "Introducing the bent handle of the spoon into the vagina, I saw everything, as no man had ever seen before." (Story of My Life, p. 234.) The building is situated at No. 104 Dexter avenue, between Perry and Court.

The place was identified by Col. B. Wyman (now living at 213 Decatur street), who was then a boy-clerk in that store and perhaps himself sold the spoon.





No. 4.

Building which was occupied by the Jewelry Store of Swan, at No. 108 Dexter avenue, between Perry and Lawrence, and in which was drawn the first silver wire which cured Anarcha, in June, 1840, and finally assured the thorough success of the operation of vesico-vaginal fistula. "I was walking from my house to the office and picked up a little bit of brass wire in the yard. It was very fine, and such as was formerly used as springs in suspenders, before the days of India-rubber. Mr. Swan made a similar piece of all pure silver." (Story of My Life, p. 245.) The wire was drawn by a workman by the name of Lewis Owens. The place was also identified by Col. Wyman.



No. 5.

House in which Dr. Sims was living at the time he left Montgomery for New York, in May, 1853. (Story of My Life, p. 266.)
It is located at 322 North Lawrence, corner of Columbus. It was also identified by Mrs. Dr. Jones.

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In New York, the meeting of the American Surgical Association was held in the superb building of the New York Academy of Medicine. There, was gathered the flower of American surgery. The discussions were most interesting. They were particularly noticeable for a courtesy and modesty in the speakers, which would have conveyed a most salutary lesson to many. The first discussion was on the radical cure of hernia, in which took part Drs. Mc Burney, Mudd, Owens, Packard, Halsted; the second discussion was on double castration for hypertrophied prostate, by Drs. W. W. White, Pilcher, Park, Halsted. As this ended, the sliding doors in the rear of the hall opened and displayed a beautiful lunch, offered to the members by Dr. Robert Abbé, who fulfilled his role with his usual grace.

After the lunch tally-hoes were in readiness, and conveyed the members to Bellevue Hospital, where the surgeons of the staff and other surgeons exhibited patients who had undergone successfully remarkable operations. The venerable Dr. Sayre consented to appear and exhibit the first case on which he operated years ago for resection of the head of the femur. It was most impressive to see these knights of American surgery seated on benches like students, and most touching to see the once bold and daring surgeon, now bent by age and infirmity,

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come to lecture to them and by his past example urge them on forward. Dr. Sayre received from this unique class such a greeting which so overwhelmed him that the tears rolled down his cheeks, whence he wiped them with a trembling hand, that right hand at one time so firm and so determined; he was several minutes before he could steady his voice and speak so as to be understood. Then the valiant old war-steed warmed up and pranced around, aided by his invalid cane, and explained the history of his first operation. The patient, now a buxom, quickly moving, fine woman, was present and the region of the operation exhibited. Other patients were also shown that are now strong, hearty, fat men who use their limb as anybody else. This exhibition of operated cases was a feature of this memorable meeting and a most interesting one. Dr. Phelps showed several operations of suturing of the fragments of the patella; also for rupture of the patellar ligaments of the tendon of the triceps from the patella. Dr. Fluhrer exhibited peculiar bone drills, urethrotome and brain probe. Dr. Alexander presented several pieces of prostatic tissue enucleated from an enlarged prostate, through the perineum; the bladder had been opened above the pubis to press down the prostate; the advantage of that procedure was to remove the hypertrophied tissue without any solution of continuity of the mucous membrane, hence very little bleeding. Dr. Markoe exhibited a case of cured congenital sacro-coccygeal tumor in an adult, a case of splenotomy, one of lateral retro-peritoneal nephrectomy, one of pyloroplasty after the method of Heincke-Mikulicz for cicatricial stenosis; lastly one of pyelitis diagnosed by catheterizing the ureters and cured, and a case of removal of the kidney. Dr. Woolsey showed a case of retrograde dilatation of œsophageal stricture. Dr. Gwyer exhibited a case of osteo-sarcoma of the jaw. Dr. Dennis lastly came forward and successively showed a case of subperiosteal excision of bone, one of multiple sarcomata, one of excision of the hip, and lastly, one of closure of artificial anus.

When this part of the programme, conducted by Dr. F. Dennis, the President of the Association, was concluded, a boat took the members to Ninetieth street, thence in tally-hoes to the beautiful Presbyterian Hospital. There Dr. Briddon and

Dr. Wright presented most interesting cases. Dr. Lewis Pilcher showed a patient with a recent compound fracture put up in apparatus that enabled that patient to walk about as if he had not had his leg broken a few days before. The principle is represented by so applying a plaster bandage that the weight of the body is received upon the parts above the point of fracture, so that the fracture may remain suspended in the case below. Dr. McCosh exhibited, among other things, a very fine operating table.

The members spent the evening at a vaudeville performance at Koster & Bial's; they were the guests of the courteous and painstaking president, Dr. F. Dennis. The evening was a most enjoyable one, all the proscenium boxes being occupied by the members, who visited each other between and during the acts.

The second day's proceedings opened at the Academy of Medicine by the discussion of the Operative Treatment of Cancer, by Drs. Gerrish, Homans, Conner, Wright, Gerster, Weir, Bull, Hartley, Murray, Tiffany, Mastin and Pilcher. Thence the members proceeded to the New York Hospital, where Dr. Arpad Gerster showed a very fine case of inversion of the foot due to a loss of bony substance, which was corrected by lowering the upper extremity of the fibula and anchoring it against the tibia. Also a case in which the loss of the dura was compensated by the wearing of a gold plate which had been worn over two and a half years, when it could be removed. Next a most interesting case of tuberculous disease of the cord in the inguinal canal; it was followed in the pelvis as far under the bladder as possible, and the operation was completed by opening the perineum, reaching the base of the bladder and taking out the whole string of diseased tissues, which involved also the seminal vesicles. Finally, a case of resection of five and a half inches of the rectum with preservation of the sphincter. Dr. Robert Weir exhibited several of his wonderful nose cases, one in particular, where a depressed nose or saddle nose had been straightened by inserting under the depression a properly shaped piece of sterilized celluloid, which acted as a pad or cushion. Also the unique case of the very man on whom he had removed the two testicles

and replaced them by celluloid testicles; indeed, unless one was suspicious of this he could not detect it upon superficial examination. A celluloid plate was also exhibited that had been worn by a patient after the removal of a brain tumor. Dr. Hartley showed a very fine case on which he had operated for a pediculated cyst of the posterior wall of the stomach.

Dr. Robert Abbé presented several cases of the highest interest and value. First, a very fine girl, of about sixteen, who had been operated in extremis for a perforation occurring during typhoid fever. Next, a case of thrombosis and abscess of the internal jugular vein and of the lateral sinus. Also a case of trephining, where a small piece of rubber tissue had been used to take the place of the dura mater. After this, a stricture of the œsophagus, cured by the author's ingenious string method. Lastly, a young child, from whom had been removed a very large sarcoma of the kidney.

Dr. William Bull exhibited some very remarkable cases of autoplasty of the hand and of the shoulder.

Dr. Murray presented a case of almost total extirpation of the tongue, there being left only a little stump of tongue, and yet the patient could talk fairly well; it was a woman, though. Also a most rare case of traumatic aneurism of the circle of Willis, discovered at the autopsy.

After this most interesting part of the programme, the members took the elevated road and repaired to the gorgeous Metropolitan Club, the millionaires' club, where they were the guests at lunch of the munificent Dr. McBurney. A grander affair had never been recorded. As soon as this had been disposed of, in the best of spirit, the association went to the Syme Operating Theatre, where Dr. F. Lange exhibited a case of cured thrombosis of the internal jugular vein, a case of nephrectomy with a diseased condition of the remaining kidney; cases of a plastic operation, with the view of preserving the action of the sphincter ani in case of resection of the rectum; also a case, a very rare cure, of tubercular breast in the female. Dr. Fowler showed a successful case of intra-cranial neurectomy by the Krause-Hartley method, a very fine case of operation for auricular appendages. Dr. Rushmore presented an interesting case of torticollis and one

of separation of the femoral head. Dr. McBurney brought a very beautiful case of removal of an epithelioma of the tonsil through the zygomatic fossa in a notable physician of New York city. Also a case of rupture of the quadriceps tendon on both sides; and one of resection of the lower jaw, where a most ingenious spring was used to keep the remainder of the bone in proper position; finally, the doctor exhibited a case of extensive pelvic fracture, resulting from a fall from a horse with the patient under the horse; extravasation of urine necessitated drainage tubes through the perineum and also above the pubis. A patient was introduced on whom Dr. McBurney's new method of operating for appendicitis had been applied, which method consists in separating the muscular fibres of the different layers, instead of cutting through them, thereby diminishing the risks of ventral hernia.

The second evening was spent at the Standard Theatre, where "Too Much Johnson" kept the members in merriment all the time. The association was there the guest of Dr. Robert Weir, who crowned his congeniality by a "kneippe" that was all that could be desired.

The third and last day was filled by the reading and discussion of the following papers: "Present Status of Anæsthesia," by Drs. Geo. W. Gay and Robert Weir, discussed by Drs. Prewitt, Wharton, Rushmore, Abbé, Lang; "Restoration of Joint Functions After Fracture," by Drs. Carmalt, Sayre, Dandridge, Roberts, Bradford, Ashhurst; "The Bacteriological Aspects of Pus and Suppuration," by Dr. Roswell Park, discussed by Drs. Halsted, Tiffany and Parmenter; "Gunshot Wound of the Heart," by Dr. Mastin; "Injuries to Pneumogastric and Phrenic Nerves," by Dr. Roswell Park; "Dislocations of the Ulnar Nerve at the Elbow," by Dr. Henry Wharton; "Immediate Suture of the Gall Duct and Gall Bladder After Extraction of Stones," by Dr. J. W. Elliott; "A Case of Cholecystotomy," by Dr. S. H. Weeks; "Personal Experiences With Mad Dogs," by Dr. Basil Norris; "Hernia of the Bladder as Met With During Operations for Inguinal and Crural Hernia," by Dr. Christian Fenger; "Radical Cure of Hernia by a New Procedure," by Dr. John H. Packard; "Ligature of the Spermatic Duct in the Treatment

of Hypertrophy of the Prostate;" "A Case of Congenital Œsophageal Pouch, Excision, Immediate Suture and Recovery," by Dr. J. S. Mixter; "Influence of Ether Narcosis Upon the Genito-Urinary Tract," by Dr. John A. Deaver, of Philadelphia.

The personal intercourse was of the most agreeable and elevating character and one returns from such meetings and associations bettered and more ambitious to contribute also his mite to the advancement of our grand and beloved profession.

Dr. Souchon spoke to several of the leading members with a view of inducing the American Surgical Association to meet in New Orleans the year after the congress in Washington, D. C.—*i. e.*, in 1898, and he secured sufficient gracious encouragement which led him to believe that he will succeed, especially when aided by the well known courtesy of the members of the Orleans Parish Medical Society and of the profession of New Orleans.